TL7153

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REPORT ON VISIT TO CANBERRA AND SYDNEY - 30/3 - 3/4 1992

This visit was undertaken for the purpose of informing relevant parties about the views and opinions on East Timor and Indonesia gathered in Jakarta in February 1992.

The following meetings were held:
Embassy of Portugal; Deputy Heads of Mission in Canberra for Belgium, Italy, Netherlands, United Kingdom; Senior adviser to Minister of Foreign Affairs; Senior Adviser to Opposition Leader in Senate and Shadow Minister of Foreign Affairs; Members of Parliamentarians for East Timor; Members of Amnesty International Australian Parliamentary Group; Chairman and Secretary of Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade; Assistant Secretary International Organisations Branch Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Human Rights Section Officer DFAT, Officer on Indonesia Desk DFAT; Foreign Affairs Spokesperson, Australian Democrats; ACFOA; Catholic Bishops Committee for Justice Development and Peace; Australian Catholic Relief; Australian Catholic Social Justice Council; Canberra Catholic Mission Development Office; Campaign for Independent East Timor members.

1. GENERAL
A consistently supportive attitude was exhibited by all those contacted, with the exception of staff of the Foreign Affairs Minister and officers of the Foreign Affairs Department. This once again underlines the strong divergence in views existing in Australia between various sectors of the population and those in charge of conducting Foreign Affairs.

Australians clearly feel very concerned about East Timor, particularly after the 12 November massacre, and are critical of successive governmental handling of the East Timor issue as well as relations with Indonesia. There is general awareness that the problem of East Timor has not been satisfactorily resolved to date, and that an adequate resolution is necessary if genuinely good relations with Indonesia are to be established.

2. PORTUGUESE EMBASSY
Foreign Minister Evans' visit to Lisbon was profoundly disturbing. His rudeness appears as a calculated effort to be hostile, probably in order to gain favour with Indonesia.

The report on current Jakarta views and attitudes we prepared was taken to Lisbon and read with great interest at Portuguese Foreign Affairs. It allowed a better understanding of Indonesian realities than had existed. The need to strive for maximum international pressure on Indonesia was carefully noted, and Portugal will endeavour to the best of its ability to encourage others to join it in this. The difficulty of useful negotiation for East Timorese self-determination at present was similarly noted.

Australia's attempts to be accepted by South East Asia seem lacking success. It cuts a poor figure internationally being so weak and accommodating to Indonesia's excesses. It is lamentable. As a result, it is not gaining much influence in Europe either. Portugal's dialogue with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs is very limited at present.

The Portuguese Embassy will continue providing as much support as possible to Australian NGOs and others supportive of East Timor.

Portugal acknowledges the need to develop greater influence in Darwin and with the NT Government. Attempting to place a professional representative there may be difficult due to possible NT Government opposition, lack of suitable candidates and cost. The frequency of visits by Canberra and Sydney based officers will however be increased for this purpose. Portugal also wishes to increase its cultural ties by for example subsidising a Chair of Portuguese Studies at Northern Territory University.

The possibility that after Soeharto Indonesia may fragment is seriously discussed by many. It is startling that Australia totally ignores this possibility and fails to develop plans to respond to it. Instead of seeking to benefit from such an eventuality, it is terrified of it and tries to prevent it happening.

The Embassy took note of the bad service the Netherlands Embassy in Jakarta is giving East Timorese Portuguese. It viewed our suggestion to hire José Amorin favourably and took it up with Lisbon. They inquired who could provide a personal referance regarding him. I suggested you could. [may be you could stress the need for this appointment again]

3. EUROPEAN DIPLOMATS

A summary of our Jakarta findings was circulated among European Community Diplomats for their information and communication to their Governments. The Portuguese Embassy then invited them for a briefing session, at short notice. Belgium, Italy, Netherlands and U.K. were represented by their Deputy Heads of Mission. It is understood that a much greater degree of political effervescence than is apparent exists in Indonesia. That Suharto faces severe criticism and that there are pro-democracy pressures. The need for international pressure on human rights was stressed as well as the post November 12 acknowledgment that past policies in East Timor have failed. There seemed to have been consensus on the need to encourage Indonesia to observe internationally upheld human rights norms, even if pressures for regime change must come from within. The unfortunate Australian policy of condoning and protecting Indonesia was discussed. One diplomat observed that the Indonesian Ambassador in Canberra had mentioned to him that Australia does not have much credibility with Indonesia because it is perceived as confusing.

3. PARLIAMENTARIANS FOR EAST TIMOR
The members reiterated their continuing support for East Timor. They expressed great interest in the information conveyed to them, i.e. that there is a widespread call for continuing international pressure on Indonesia for human rights violations and that Indonesian leadership acknowledges the failure of past policies on East Timor. This provides an opportunity for inputs regarding more appropriate future policies. Members acknowledged the misleading reports they obtain from the Dept. of Foreign Affairs, and expressed strong criticism of Australia's misguided foreign policy regarding Indonesia. The generally 'timid' attitude of Australia, fearful of 'offending' was deplored. It was acknowledged that East Timor is the major impediment to positive Australia/ Indonesia relations. It needs to be properly addressed an resolved, rather than covered up, before the relationship can be stabilised. Human rights violations in the rest of Indonesia are also a concern. Democratisation should be encouraged. Gary Gibson intends to launch a new media campaign to lead to greater public involvement on the issue, which is held to be one of profound concern to the Australian public. It was decided for the group to approach the Prime Minister to urge him once again to take a strong stand on human rights during his forthcoming visit to Jakarta later in April.

4. MEMBERS OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENTARY GROUP
Acknowledged the serious human rights violations in East Timor and the unfavourable record in Indonesia. Agreed on need for pressure. The question was raised of how much pressure to apply however. To the point of totally breaking off dialogue?

5. MYLES KUPA, Senior Adviser to Gareth Evans.
(Agreed to receive me as a Darwin resident interested in regional relations, with no accreditations.)
Australia is quite satisfied with the improvements regarding East Timor. DFAT has done much to improve the situation. So far the Indonesian response has been credible, even if are still awaiting the final results of the KPN inquiry into November 12. In any case the fact that there have been investigations and punishments is something unprecedented, a great advance.
DFAT has four major areas of attention regarding East Timor: improvement of human rights, punishment of those responsible for 12 November, fair trials of detainees, reduction of military presence. Progress on these is satisfactory.
In Geneva Australia did the best it could do. A more confrontative stance would have been negative. Influence with Indonesia would have been affected. Australia "would have been told to get lost".
Evans is trying to open a DFAT office in Darwin. The NT Government needs more advice. Activities in Darwin are increasing. The Lusitania Expresso is an example.

6. DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE: Robert Cotton, Assistant Secretary International Organisations Branch; Ian Russell, Human Rights Section Officer; an Officer of the Indonesia Section.
DFAT is actively concerned with human rights in Indonesia including East Timor. Is doing as much as possible both bilaterally as well as multilaterally. Much improvement regarding human rights of individuals is being achieved. The recent resolution on Indonesia at Geneva was basically acceptable, but the language of some parts was not. By not being to confrontational a more constructive result was achieved.
Indonesia is not prepared to consider self-determination for the East Timorese. It is not likely to come up in the United Nations system. Australia endorses the Secretary General's efforts to get Indonesia and Portugal together to discuss a resolution of the East Timor issue. [what about the East Timorese role in this?]
DFAT is aware that there are brewing of discontent in Indonesia. However, is there no public acknowledgment of the most valuable role Suharto has played to advance the country? In 1965 inflation was 1000%, etc etc.....(!). The favourable balance of trade between both countries is important, etc, etc,...
[They repeatedly expressed the standard perceptions regarding Indonesia's stability and the convenience of close relations with the present regime. They clearly revealed a lack of awareness of the views of the broader society beyond the power elite. A number of notes were taken however on my points regarding calls for greater international pressure on human rights, aspirations for democratisation, dissent, and acknowledgments of failure of past policies in East Timor.]

7. Dr JOHN NATION, Senior Adviser, Foreign Affairs, Office of Senator Robert Hill, Senate Opposition Leader and Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs.
Expressed interest in the information on widespread dissent in Indonesia and increasing de-legitimisation of Suharto. Did not appear too well informed on details of current Indonesian affairs. Was concerned as to whether a successor regime was likely to be any better to the present one. Was concerned about the negative effect on Netherlands influence there of the Indonesian rebuke regarding its foreign aid: an example for others who take a leading role in too confrontational criticism.

8. Dr. ANDREW THEOPHANOUS, Chairman and PATRICK REGAN, Secretary, of Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade.
Their inquiry is compiling astonishing information on Australia/Indonesia relations. When ready, some startling revelations will be made which will cause profound impact. They would like to get the Australian and Indonesian people linked closer together. However the way Foreign Affairs has

attempted to do it so far is most inappropriate. Foreign policy will need to change. Democratisation of Indonesia should be supported.

9. CATHOLIC MISSION AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE
Michael Sullivan has been a long term supporter of East Timor and critic of Australian Government policies. Will intensify pressure through the Church and personally. Both for East Timor and democratisation in Indonesia. Clearly sees the linkage and desirability of both.

10. CATHOLIC BISHOPS COMMITTEE FOR JUSTICE DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE, SOCIAL JUSTICE COUNCIL, CATHOLIC RELIEF.
The Catholic Church in Australia is concerned with East Timor. It is the most important social justice issue in this region. There is a conviction in the Church that there is a need to act. Bishop Brennan (Head of the Social Justice Council) visited Dili in December and clearly saw how people in East Timor are oppressed and dislike Indonesia. He greatly admires Bishop Belo. The head of Catholic Relief also visited and saw how people are intimidated. The head of Social Justice Council will stress the need to grant autonomy to East Timor. This corresponds with Bishop Belo's current thrust.
[I encouraged them to raise the profile of Darwin as a base for Australian Catholic Church support to East Timor- they will explore this further]

11. BOOK LAUNCH
Attended the launch of Robert Domm and Mark Aaron's latest book at ANU in Canberra. A number of loyal East Timor supporters were present. The utility of linking the struggle for East Timor self-determination with democratisation of Indonesia was mentioned. It is intended to open a Darwin branch of the East Timor Relief Association.

12. HUMAN RIGHTS CONSULTATION AT DFAT
Unable to attend as not invited. I had briefed a number of participants beforehand however. Jim Dunn, who had asked for copy of the Jakarta interview transcripts, had a lengthy exposition of their main points. Bishop Brennan also related at length his impressions of the rejection of Indonesia by the East Timorese. I was told that Gareth Evans was thoroughly taken to task. He stayed much longer than planned and was extremely tense. He complained at the unjustified hostility of the Portuguese in Lisbon recently, and the unhelpful attitude of the European Community towards Indonesia.

13. DEMOCRATS FOREIGN AFFAIRS SPOKESPERSON
Met Senator Vicki Bourne in Sydney. She valued being updated and committed herself to press for greater scrutiny of Indonesian human rights in Indonesia and East Timor. Will continue being active on this.

-oOo-

Darwin, 8 April 1992

FROM : Juan Federer
TO : José Ramos Horta
Date : 8 April 1992
Ref : Canberra Trip

INVOICE

For expenses incurred as follows:

Air fare	$ 775
Accommodation	55
Meals, telephones, misc. approx.	65
Transport approx.	80
	975

TOTAL (Australian) $ 975

(nine hundred and seventy five Australian dollars)

Please forward a bank cheque (or personal Australian cheque) to us at your convenience for the amount of A$ 975 (nine hundred and seventy five Australian dollars)

Sincerely,

Juan Federer

PS Please note that the refund of A$ 1,740 for my last Jakarta trip has as yet not reached me. Kindly inquire as to the progress of this payment. Early receipt would be appreciated.